

BEFORE
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
DOCKET NO. 2005-110-W/S - ORDER NO. 2005-224
MAY 9, 2005

IN RE: Petition of the Office of Regulatory Staff to)	ORDER APPOINTING
Request Forfeiture of the Piney Grove)	HEARING OFFICER
Utilities, Inc. Bond and to Request Authority)	
to Petition the Circuit Court for Appointment)	
of a Receiver.)	

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) on the Commission's Motion to appoint Mr. Joseph Melchers, Esquire, Chief Counsel, to serve as a hearing officer in the instant docket regarding the Petition of the Office of Regulatory Staff pertaining to certain matters involving Piney Grove Utilities, Inc. This appointment is in order that the hearing officer may dispose of procedural and evidentiary matters pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Section 58-3-40 (Supp. 2004). The Motion is granted.

Section 58-3-40(C)(1) states that upon the request of any party or any commissioner, the commission may employ a hearing officer who may hear and determine procedural motions or other matters not determinative of the merits of the proceedings. Under (C)(2), the hearing officer has full authority, subject to being overruled by the commission, to rule on questions concerning the conduct of the case and other matters. Under (C)(3), the officer must be an attorney qualified to practice in all courts of this State with a minimum of eight years' practice experience.

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We find that Mr. Joseph Melchers meets this qualification, and we therefore grant the Motion appointing him as hearing officer in this case.

This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

/s/
Randy Mitchell, Chairman

ATTEST:

/s/
G. O'Neal Hamilton, Vice Chairman

(SEAL)